

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3496

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3577

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A) XF, IS, LE

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS

REF: JERUSALEM'S 0568 (SECTO 484)

1. DELIVERED MESSAGE CONTAINED REFTEL TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE 8 P.M. SUNDAY, MARCH 23. FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA ALSO PRESENT. THEY READ MESSAGE CAREFULLY AND EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP REGRET AND CONCERN THAT MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION HAD COME TO THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS. THEY ANTICIPATE EXTREME DIFFICULTIES FOR PRESIDENT SADAT, HEIGHTENED AND AGGRESSIVE ISRAELI PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, WHICH THEY SAY ALREADY BEGAN YESTERDAY, AND ESCALATION REPRISALS AND COUNTER-REPRISALS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND FATAH, WHICH WILL INVOLVE LEBANESE TERRITORY AND PROBABLY LEBANESE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.

2. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION THEY ANALYZED KEY ISSUE AS DECLARATION BY EGYPT OF END OF HOSTILITIES AND ISRAELI OBJECTIVE THEREBY TO DESTROY SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN UNDERSTANDING.

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3. TAQLA, WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE LEFT YESTERDAY FOR CAIRO TO ATTEND ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, BUT WHOSE DEPARTURE WAS DELAYED BY BAD WEATHER, ANTICIPATES BITTER RECRIMINATIONS AMONG ARABS AND FIELD DAY FOR RADICALS WHO CAN TAKE "I TOLD YOU SO" ATTITUDE AND ACTIVELY POLITICK MORE VIOLENT ACTION. ROLE OF THE LEBANON, WITH WHICH PRESIDENT HEARTILY AGREED, WAS TO ENDEAVOR BRING SOME REASON TO THESE DISCUSSIONS AND HOPEFULLY TO REDUCE EXTREMIST STATEMENTS AND/OR ACTIONS.

4. NEITHER TAQLA NOR PRESIDENT COULD FORESEE IMMEDIATE FUTUE BUT SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT "ON TO GENEVA" MOVEMENT WOULD GAIN MOMENTUM BUT WOULD OF COURSE RESULTNIN NOTHING AS MAJOR ISSUES WERE STILL UNRESOLVED. BOTH, HOWEVER, WERE EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC RE RENEWING UN FORCES, EIGHTER IN SINAI OR GOLAN AND OPINED THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER MAJOR HURDLE THAT THEY SAW LITTLE HOPE OF RESOLVING. BOTH PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP PERSONAL REGRET THAT SECRETARY, WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD FOR PEACE, HAS SUFFERED THIS SETBACK WHICH THEY HOPE WILL BE ONLY MOMENTARY.

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